

What should I already know?

- South America is a **continent**.
- The **climate** of South America is different to that of the UK.
- **Human** and **physical geographical** features of a region in South America.
- Other **civilisations** include the Egyptians and the Greeks.
- What **erosion** is and what impact it can have on land.



Diagrams

Where did the **Mayans** live?



Famous **Mayan** cities include **Palenque** and **Chichen Itza**, which are found in Mexico.

Mayan Society

- **Mayan** cities had similar layouts to each other. They would have a palace for the ruler, a **plaza** for the marketplaces and temples, in the form of **pyramids**.
- **Mayan** cities were often found near **trade** routes and good farmland.
- Mayans were **polytheists**, believing in many nature gods or **deities**.
- Priests were considered the most important people in the **Mayan culture**. Warriors, craftsmen and **traders** were next in the **hierarchy**. Farmers, workers and slaves were at the bottom of the **hierarchy**.
- **Mayan merchants** traded many goods including salt, cotton, honey and jade.
- The **Mayan** calendar (Tzolkin) consisted of 260 days and 13 months.
- The **demise** of the **Mayan** civilisation came about because of a mixture of **deforestation**, **land erosion** and **drought**.

Vocabulary

archaeologist	someone who studies the past by exploring old remains
architecture	the art of planning, designing and constructing buildings
Chichen Itza	a village in Yucatán state in Mexico: site of important Mayan ruins. A UNESCO World Heritage Site
civilisation	a human society with its own social organisation and culture .
climate	the general weather conditions that are typical of it.
continent	a very large area of land that consists of many countries . South America is a continent .
culture	activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilisation
deforestation	if an area is deforested, all the trees there are cut down
deities	a god or goddess
demise	something or someone is their end or death
drought	a long period of time during which no rain falls.
economy	the wealth that a society or country gets from business and industry
erosion	the gradual destruction and removal of rock or soil
fertile	rich in nutrients to support the growth of many plants
hierarchy	a system of organising people into different ranks or levels of importance, for example in society
indigenous	people or things belong to the country in which they are found
human features	features of land that have been impacted by human activity
Mayan	of, relating to, or characteristic of the Maya or any of their languages
merchant	a person who buys or sells goods in large quantities
Mesoamerica	Central America - the countries consist of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Belize; and the western sections of Honduras and Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica
physical features	natural features of land
plaza	an open square in a city.
polytheists	the worship of or belief in more than one god
society	people in general, thought of as a large organized group
trade	the activity of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services

Historical Skills and Enquiry

- Examine a variety of sources and use these to make inferences about the past - in particular about **Mayan economy, culture, religious beliefs and society**.
- Describe how the **Mayan civilisation** has had an impact on modern **society**.
- Examine the timeline of the **Mayan civilisation** and consider where there was rapid change and where there was very little change.. Explain why this may be the case.
- Compare what was happening in the **Mayan civilisation** with what was happening in Britain at the same time.
- Compare the **Mayans** with the Greek and Egyptian **civilisations** using a Venn diagram.
- Describe the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of all groups of people in the **Mayan civilisation**.
- Present what you know about the **Mayans** using a variety of skills (e.g. Geography English, Maths, Computing, etc)
- Use appropriate vocabulary to communicate about the **Mayans**.

Timeline

c. AD 250: By this stage, the Mayan had many established cities. They had many monuments, pyramids and devised a writing and maths system.

c. AD 840: The quality of the fields is poor, and this combined with **land erosion**, leads to a **drought**.

Today...there are still 7 million **indigenous Mayan** people living in Central America.

c. AD 600: The **Mayan** population exceeded 5,000,000 people. Excessive farming and **deforestation** due to overflow from the cities were commonplace and this led to land becoming less **fertile**.

c. AD 900: Many Mayan cities are deserted due to **deforestation, drought** and war.